



Illinois Inroads to Inclusion

By Lois Barnhart, Illinois Inclusion Officer

August 2011

Illinois Inclusion Efforts

The newly formed Illinois Inclusion Team had a meet and greet conference call July 18. The call was facilitated by National Service Inclusion Project (NSIP) staff. The Inclusion Team will be gathering in Peoria, at Children's Home on September 27, for a full day of Inclusion training presented by NSIP. This training event will assist the team in developing a strategic plan for the year ahead. The team brings expertise and passion in regard to inclusion of people with disabilities in National Service programs. AmeriCorps programs, alumni, current members and experts from the field will be joining together to develop strategies to promote inclusion state wide. Look for a report in October as to specifics regarding the strategic plan.

Also in September, AmeriCorps program directors will meet for a Fall training in Springfield. National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) has agreed to provide a half day Inclusion training for the directors. NAMI training will provide more tools to program directors to successfully recruit, accommodate and retain individuals with mental illness into their programs.

Illinois Program Directors have increased efforts to recruit and to accommodate individuals with disabilities this past year. There has been an increase in "intentional" outreach and a heightened creativity in searching for appropriate accommodations. It is the goal that all AmeriCorps programs practice Inclusion as the norm. Continued training and building awareness are aimed at providing the tools needed for this to happen.

In closing, the National Conference for Volunteerism and Community Service was held in New Orleans, LA, June 4 through 8. Commission staff returned with fresh ideas and new partnerships for networking. The Conference culminated with the announcement that 2012 National Conference will be held in our own Chicago. The Serve Illinois Commission has embraced the opportunity to host this event in Chicago. A tract on Inclusion will be offered for all those interested in learning more from those within our state and champions from across the country. Hope to see you there!

Look for a new issue of the Inroads to Inclusion in late September.

Illinois Disability Outreach

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LINKS OF INTEREST:

Inclusion:

NSIP (National Service Inclusion Project)
www.serviceandinclusion.org

Volunteerism:

Opportunities in Illinois
www.serve.illinois.gov

AmeriCorps
www.americorps.org

Self-Disclosure:
www.zurinstitute.com/

